



WATER USE MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

In many areas of the world, demand for water exceeds supply and is seriously straining available water resources. Some of the most water-stressed areas in the world, such as the Mediterranean, are also home to some of the largest international tourism destinations. Guest demand for water usually far exceeds that of local residents. In addition to the water required for each hotel room and general hotel management activities such as kitchens and laundry, features such as swimming pools, lawns and golf courses can add significantly to total usage. Excessive water use can degrade or destroy local water resources, threatening the availability of water for local needs. Problems may be made worse in areas where high tourist season corresponds with periods of low rainfall.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- Decreasing overall water use can lead to cost savings, especially during periods of drought, use restrictions or increasingly strict government regulations on water use.
- Reducing water use can conserve and protect local water resources upon which a hotel and the local community depend.
- Preserving the quality of local water resources can eliminate the need for costly drinking water treatment processes.
- Water conservation can enhance reputation among guests and others who are concerned about reducing water consumption and protecting local resources.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Identify the main areas of water consumption in your hotel where significant water savings may be achieved.
- Regularly monitor your water consumption for each area of the hotel (kitchen, laundry, rooms, etc.). Daily or weekly monitoring helps to identify leaks and to quantify water savings when efficient equipment is installed or a good practice is implemented.
- Encourage guests to use their towels or linens for more than one day. Provide guests with tips about water-saving measures such as turning off the taps in the sink when shaving or brushing their teeth.
- Work with employees to identify water-saving practices, such as avoiding leaving water running, or operating washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
- Engage your housekeeping and engineering departments in an active campaign to detect and repair leaking toilets, faucets and showerheads.
- Install water-saving devices such as low-flush toilets and low-flow shower heads and faucets. Low-flow fixtures in showers can reduce the flow of water by 50 percent without affecting the comfort level of the user.
- Maintain your equipment regularly. The absence of preventive maintenance generates small but regular leaks, which can correspond to an important loss of water.
- Use technologies that reduce water use through recycling.
- Avoid wasteful landscaping practices, such as hosing outdoor surfaces and watering gardens during the day.
- Use drip irrigation systems and choose drought-resistant native plant species for landscaping.